State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
INFORMATION RESOURCES MANAGEMENT BOARD
Meeting Report

Date/Place—April 24, 2003/Department of Administration, Providence

Members/Representatives Present—Howard Boksenbaum, OLIS—RIDOA (Acting Chair); Ellen Alexander, DOC; Maggie Dziadkiewicz, OHE; Michael Hogan, RI House Policy; Joan Ress Reeves, Library Board of RI; James Willis, Secretary of State's Office; Don Wolfe, Member-at-Large;

Members/Representatives Absent—Stephen Alves, RI Senate; Rosemary Booth Gallogly, Budget Office—RIDOA; Nicholas Leporacci, MHRH; Janet Levesque, RILOCAT; Raymond McKay, City of Warwick; Peter McWalters, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Dexter Merry, Public Telecommunications Authority; James R. Monti, Jr., West Warwick School District; Joseph Pomposelli, DLT; Christopher Wessells, URI

Other Attendees—Carol Ciotola, Recording Secretary, OLIS—RIDOA; Joan Gammon, RI.gov; Debra Luling, NIC; Mark Treat, Governor's Information Technology Transition Team Task Force

Chair's Report—Mr. Boksenbaum reported that: (1) The Department of Administration is in the processing of hiring a Chief Information Officer for the State of Rhode Island. The deadline for applications is May 3. He stated that he has not submitted his resume for this position, nor does he intend to, but does look forward to having the State hire a Chief Information Officer with a fresh focus. This Board's discussions were a major source of the job description used in the posting. He will keep the membership apprised as this process moves forward.

- Ms. Reeves asked if the job description includes governance of Library Programs. Mr. Boksenbaum explained that Library Programs and Statewide Planning will continue under OLIS until the law is changed to the contrary. There remains a question of where these units will ultimately be placed once the Governor's Fiscal Fitness program has considered them.

(2) The State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ISAC), formed to provide a focal point for states to gather and share information on cyber and physical threats to critical infrastructures, has been meeting via phone conferences. Twenty-four states are currently participating. At its next meeting, this group will ratify protocols for use in reporting information. There are plans to establish a Rhode Island ISAC once protocols are in place. Richard Paquette of the OLIS-IT staff has been selected to manage a state ISAC list for cyber threats, and John Aucott of EMA will be responsible for threats to physical structures. (3) The Governor's IT Transition Team is now the IT Task Force. Along with the Governor's Fiscal Fitness program's IT Team, it will be reviewing the current information technology process in state government. At Mr. Boksenbaum's request, Mr. Treat who chairs the Fiscal Fitness IT Team and is a member of the IT Task Force was asked to provide a rundown on these activities. He stated that the Task Force, still in full existence, is comprised of Chief Information Officers of large companies. They are reviewing how the state currently leverages information technology. He noted that Mr. Wolfe participates in the Task Force. Mr. Treat is also involved in the Fiscal Fitness program; thus, he will coordinate efforts between the two groups. Mr. Treat viewed this nonpolitically motivated Task Force, which is vetting through issues to present recommendations, as a great opportunity. The Fiscal Fitness effort kicked off on Monday, April 21. There are 33 teams, of which about 6 are cross-functional. The teams' goal for the first month is to learn about current state practices. Their next goal would be to look for ways to improve how government operates. The IT Team works closely with Mr. Boksenbaum and has reviewed OLIS's process and procedures. In terms of funding spent on state information technology, OLIS spends about one-seventh or one-eighth of the state's IT budget. The remainder of funding spent on IT is spread out among the various agencies. There is substantial skill and infrastructure within the state, and the IT Team must determine the best way to collaboratively coordinate it. The IT Transition Team, IT Task Force and OLIS may present issues to the Board that would need to be addressed. Mr. Boksenbaum encouraged all involved in the analysis process to view this Board as a resource. (4) Two audits are in process: The first is an audit of the RI-SAIL project, requested by the State Controller. A draft has been completed and is being reviewed by the Controller

and the RI-SAIL Management Committee. Their responses will be submitted to the auditor, who will then discuss them with the new Assistant Director of the Department of Administration, and will then make recommendations to the Director and the Governor. At that point this document would become a public document. The second is an audit of New England Interactive (NEI), the company that manages the State's portal. The audit was requested by this Board to review contract compliance. Although this audit has not yet progressed to the discussion stage, information is expected soon.

Approval of February 20, 2003, Meeting Report—The February 20, 2003, Meeting Report, was approved, as presented, by unanimous consent.

Portal Review Committee Report—Ms. Gammon reported that:

1) She met several times with Governor's Office staff to discuss NEI's contract with the State, the portal's accomplishments, and how best to move forward. She asked Mr. Treat to comment on the progress of those discussions to date. Mr. Treat said that he met with NEI's legal counsel several weeks ago to talk conceptually about the relationship between NEI and the State and which projects that could be undertaken to move forward. He plans to meet with the Chief Financial Officer of NEI in two weeks to discuss the costs involved to run the portal, revenue streams available and mechanisms that could be incorporated into the contract to grow the portal, so that it could become more than just a web-based front end. He also plans to review NEI's project portfolio and priorities. There are many opportunities to be leveraged within this process, and the State wants to be sure that it takes full advantage of them. To date, discussions have been positive. The State desperately needs an information technology infrastructure, and NEI's model is one it could leverage in a cost-effective way.

2) To raise RI.gov's awareness, she spoke at the Rhode Island Government Finance Officer's quarterly meeting, explaining what RI.gov could bring to communities. Attendees were municipal government employees and state finance officers.

   ▪ Mr. Treat suggested that this Board assist the DMV with its approach to capture data for the 30 communities that collect car taxes for payment to the Division of Taxation; it is antiquated. If this process were to be integrated into the licensing Web-based system, municipalities could then go online to update the data. The Board could recommend this process as the best and only one to be used, followed by submitting its recommendation in writing to the appropriate parties. Ms. Gammon thought this to be a good point and cited RI.gov as one possibility to handle this type of seamless government initiative. She is currently checking into just this type of application with municipalities.

3) Switching the Internet domain name to ri.gov will add visibility to the portal's URL, resulting in increased portal traffic.

4) A new fee service was launched—State Police Academy Application, which would allow those wishing to become Rhode Island State Troopers to apply online. Also, the Lt. Governor's redesigned Web site was launched.

5) Launching of several portal tools was announced at the Webmakers' meeting this month, including: Calendar, Press Release, Frequently Asked Questions, and Emergency Page. A "News" tool was also implemented, which is controlled by OLIS staff so that news stories can be changed without contacting portal staff. This tool was implemented in an effort to make the Home Page dynamic.

6) Several submittals were made by NEI with respect to award opportunities for Rhode Island's portal. She asked that anyone with knowledge of local award opportunities to contact her.

   ▪ Mr. Boksenbaum spoke about the "Ask a Librarian" feature. He explained that the Providence Public Library receives state funding to serve as a reference resource center for the state. They are contractually obligated to respond to questions within 24 hours. PPL reports to OLIS periodically in terms of questions received. These questions will be categorized and analyzed in an attempt to identify new features that could be added to various State Web sites. Ms. Gammon said this service could provide a great use for the "Frequently Asked Questions" tool.

   ▪ Mr. Hogan asked for additional information with respect to the State's switch over to a new Internet domain. Mr. Boksenbaum explained that the long-awaited protocols for use of state ".gov"

domains were released last month. OLIS has subsequently requested contact information from state agencies to initiate this change in domain. What prompted this change is that the use of the "us" domain was limited to "us" sites until last year when a change was instituted to allow "us" to be marketed. The piece of authenticity identifying a "us" site was taken away. Currently, protocols allowing state governments to use ".gov" have been released. By having state agencies use them, as well as suggesting that municipal governments use them, it will give the State an authoritative presence and unify the its face on the Web. By the end of December, OLIS should be able to discontinue routing e-mail to all but one domain. The courts are addressing this matter, as is the Legislature. OLIS has created a reorientation table, so that any Web URL that ends in "ri.us" will point Web users to "ri.gov." Agencies will be allowed to complete this switch over at their own paces. The only costs identified thus far have been paper collateral and advertising. OLIS will support both URL's through the end of this calendar year. Mr. Willis asked if there were any plans to sell "ri.us" commercially. Mr. Boksenbaum was not aware of any plans and thought it unlikely to happen.

- Ms. Ress Reeves asked about the status of DMV's online vehicle registration renewal service. Mr. Treat noted that this service is on hold until the Governor concludes a full review of the portal operations. He explained that the sense of the Governor's Office is that the Governor is reluctant to impose consumer-oriented fees. He is not reluctant to using this model for businesses, however. At this point it is not a policy but just his initial reluctance until he gains a better understanding of portal operations. He would not want this charge to be perceived as a new tax. Ms. Gammon noted that many have told her that they would be thrilled to pay $3 to conduct this transaction on line as opposed to having to wait in line at the DMV. She added that both she and her predecessor had presented survey information on this service to the Governor. Mr. Treat explained that the issue is not that simple. Citing a past practice—DMV's imposed $10 walk-in fee to renew registrations—he explained that some viewed it as a disincentive. Online registration renewals could be viewed the same way. One of the Governor's primary goals is to "fix the DMV." Another issue associated with online registration renewals is how credit card fees would be collected. These issues are currently being addressed.

Communications Working Group (CWG) Report—Mr. Boksenbaum explained that the CWG was originally convened to figure out how best to spend bioterrorism money and then became a working group that serves the Domestic Preparedness Subcommittee (DPS), which is part of the Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council (EMAC). This Group has representation from a variety of agencies, as well as other participants in homeland security networks. At this morning's meeting, the Group named its new dispatchers' radio network the "Rhode Island Tactical Emergency Radio Network" (RITERN), and a recommendation resulted in the purchase of 71 800 MHz radio base stations to be located at each of the dispatching units in the state that are manned 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Work continues to finalize the Memorandum of Understanding that will be executed between the State Police and each entity receiving a radio. Once installed, dispatchers with these radios will be able to speak to each other. This was a huge issue with respect to The Station fire and the Johnston Nursing Home fire. A purchase order has also been executed to create a RINET-MUNI parallel, high-speed data network connecting all non-educational aspects of all municipalities. A router would be located in each municipality's city/town hall and would be managed by RINET, who provide the K-12 educational network. Bioterrorism money will be used to fund these routers and a year's worth of connectivity for each community. RINET will also market and administer this network. This work should begin within the next several weeks. By the end of this fiscal year it is expected that seven or eight municipalities will connect to the network. Part of the reason for this undertaking resulted from the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC's) request for states to create a network that would connect to all nodes, so that communities could be contacted without having to go out on the commercial Internet and without having to have signals leave the state. This Group has also engaged RCC Consultants to study the State's future needs with respect to radio communications in emergency situations and in instances of bioterrorism.

▪ Mr. Willis asked if there are parameters with respect to the connections' uses, explaining that the Secretary of State also has plans to reach out to all communities by creating a network. Mr. Boksenbaum said that he and Mr. Willis should meet to discuss the Secretary of State's plans in this area. He stressed that there was no need for concern at this point about bandwidth capability. Mr. Treat suggested that the Secretary of State's Office and RINET pool its applications. Mr. Willis asked again about the parameters, and Mr. Treat asked if RINET was a private network. Mr. Boksenbaum explained that RINET is a private network that, in turn, is connected to the Internet. The existing RINET network is funded with FCC E-Rate rebates that are used solely for educational purposes. Ms. Gammon noted that she and Ms. Hussey of RINET have spoken with respect to possible synergies. Mr. Treat noted that not all communities have computers. While true, Mr. Boksenbaum explained that several such communities have approached RINET to discuss possible synergies, for example, locating equipment and using hubs outside of the schools' network to bring communities and schools together. Mr. Willis noted that the Secretary of State's Office has federal funds for his outreach proposal but felt it would be redundant to create a second network to achieve the same goal as RINET.

Remarks by Debra Luling—Ms. Gammon introduced Ms. Luling from the National Information Consortium (NIC), NEI's parent company, who spoke about e-government in general. She explained that she started with NIC in 1996. At that time no one in state government understood the value of having information placed on the Internet. By 1997, though, state agencies were contacting NIC to push forward with their proposed initiatives. In 2000 when she was managing the state of Kansas' portal, she was presented with the opportunity to start up a portal for the state of Tennessee. She spoke of her experience in Tennessee with respect to developing and implementing a driver license renewal application within 45 days. She hastened to discourage others from building an application at such a rapid rate without having the policies behind it. Thus, she felt it a smart idea for Rhode Island to insure that all issues are resolved before implementing these types of services. Currently in Tennessee there is a 15 percent adoption rate for license renewals online, and a 25 percent adoption rate for professional license renewals online, which indicates that these online services are catching on. In fact, some business applications have an 85 percent adoption rate. NIC has compiled an enormous amount of information over the last ten years, and part of what NIC does is to share that information. She encouraged the Board to challenge Ms. Gammon in this regard. Her work is currently moving towards the Product Development Division, and from NIC's perspective, she will seek to streamline Ms. Gammon's job to enable her to perform her work more efficiently.

Old Business—None

New Business—Mr. Willis announced that over the past two years he has been working to develop open source software that could be shared. The General Services Agency has agreed to take responsibility for collaboration with federal and state agencies in this effort. They will provide computer equipment and network connections for Rhode Island and other interstate co-development sites, so that software can be shared. This project is scheduled to begin in the next two weeks. Ultimately, this software would be shared with all states.

▪ Mr. Treat asked if XMC standards were in place. Mr. Willis replied that they are.

▪ Mr. Treat asked Ms. Luling if she was involved with what NIC is doing in California with respect to back-office data. She said no. He explained that this fee-based model would replace back-office systems by using open source library codes. If Rhode Island were to replace back-office systems, it would need to create integration connectors. He suggested developing a list of objectives for interfacing with an open source infrastructure, noting the need for a mechanism to pool the right objectives. NIC is now competing with large companies on this front and is using an Indiana development firm to conduct this work. NIC's accomplishment of such a task gives the company credibility. All design work would have to be a big methodology; otherwise, the code would not get developed. He felt that Rhode Island needs this type of dynamic. Ms. Luling explained that NIC is serving as a subcontractor in the project that Mr. Treat spoke about. She emphasized that part of what

NIC delivers is not necessarily technology but more a byproduct leveraging ten years of experience with laws and issues.

- Mr. Treat said that the issue as to what is proprietary and what is open source has been raised. Even with respect to proprietary information, he raised the question of whether or not the state wanted an outside source to have control of its infrastructure. A process needs to be developed to resolve this issue with respect to a connection from an agency's backend to another entity. How open the software should be must also be addressed. Mr. Willis cited an example of an open source—writing a front end for a Press Release tool. The question is: How open should the back end be in order to program into ORACLE or a similar database?

- Mr. Treat indicated that the vendor should be responsible for insuring that methodologies and documents are in place with respect to what is and what is not open. Ms. Luling indicated that there are risks at both ends (for vendor and state), and policies and issues should be resolved up front.

- Mr. Treat suggested using NIC's system as a model, whereby, five or six state agencies with document management systems could secure an enterprise license and create standards. Ms. Luling noted that writing the code would not be time consuming but writing code that could easily be transferred would be; and the process would need to be documented. Mr. Willis felt that the benefits would be huge. Ms. Luling recommended having standards in place for such an endeavor. Mr. Treat believes the portal infrastructure to be an enterprise portal that should not be proprietary.

- Mr. Willis had spoken about a proposal that would include data-specific agencies, such as DOH. He explained that state agencies are so specific that multi-state silos would be necessary. Mr. Boksenbaum suggested that he contact the Robert Wood Foundation, which could benefit him and which he could benefit from in this effort in the public health arena.

- Mr. Treat noted that with respect to the DMV system, Covansis claims that 40 percent of the code would need to be customized but that 60 percent could be reused.

Next Meeting—Thursday, June 19, at 3 p.m. at the Department of Administration, in Providence.